IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. to 39. (Canceled)

40. (Currently Amended) A software distributing system for distributing control software used by an image forming apparatus to an external apparatus via a network, wherein the external apparatus is the image forming apparatus or an information processing apparatus connected with the image forming apparatus, said system comprising:

a receiving unit configured to receive, from the external apparatus, production lot information of a consumable unit and operation information indicating a number of prints output or a number of times of jams at the image forming apparatus, of a consumable unit from the external apparatus, wherein the consumable unit is detachably located in the image forming apparatus and comprises a plurality of consumable hardware parts for forming an image to a recording medium, and a memory for storing the production lot information of the consumable unit, wherein the production lot information is an identifier which differs according to differences in production conditions of the consumable unit, and wherein the production conditions are based on a material and the production environment;

a selecting unit configured to select the control software based on the production lot information and the operation information received by the receiving unit; and

a controller unit configured to distribute the control software selected by the selecting unit to the external apparatus via the network;

wherein the selecting unit selects, from a plurality of control software, necessary control software for distribution ~~from a plurality of control software based on~~ depending on whether the operation information indicates an amount exceeding a first predetermined amount or a second predetermined amount which exceeds the first predetermined amount,

wherein the distributed control software is used for updating the image forming apparatus by the external apparatus, and wherein the updating is performed based on whether or not a print job of the image forming apparatus is in execution.

41. (Previously Presented) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the production lot information of the consumable unit is based on a combination of the product lot information of said consumable hardware parts.

42. and 43. (Cancelled)

44. (Previously Presented) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the external apparatus is a computer connected with the image forming apparatus.

45. to 49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) A information processing method for distributing control software used by an image forming apparatus to an external apparatus via a network, wherein the external apparatus is the image forming apparatus or an information processing apparatus connected with the image forming apparatus, said method comprising:

a receiving step which receives, from the external apparatus, production lot information of a consumable unit and operation information indicating a number of prints output or a number of times of jams at the image forming apparatus of a consumable unit from the external apparatus, wherein the consumable unit is detachably located in the image forming apparatus and comprises a plurality of consumable hardware parts for forming an image to a recording medium, and a memory for storing the production lot information of the consumable unit, wherein the production lot information is an identifier which differs according to differences in production conditions of the consumable unit, and wherein the production conditions are based on a material and the production environment;

a selecting step which selects the control software based on the production lot information of the consumable unit and the operation information received by the receiving step; and

a controlling step which distributes the control software selected by the selecting step to the external apparatus via the network;

wherein the selecting step selects, from a plurality of control software, necessary control software for distribution, depending on ~~from a plurality of control software based on~~ whether the operation information indicates an amount exceeding a first predetermined amount or a second predetermined amount which exceeds the first predetermined amount,

wherein the distributed control software is used for updating the image forming apparatus by the external apparatus, and wherein the updating is performed based on whether or not a print job of the image forming apparatus is in execution.

51. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 50, wherein the production lot information of the consumable unit is based on a combination of the product lot information of said consumable hardware parts.

52. and 53. (Cancelled)

54. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 50, wherein the external apparatus is a computer connected with the image forming apparatus.

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55. to 59. (Canceled)

60. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 50, wherein a computer-executable program stored on a computer-readable medium causes a computer to execute said information processing method.

61. to 63. (Canceled)

64. (Previously Presented) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the consumable unit is a process cartridge, and wherein said consumable hardware part includes at least one of a photoconductor and a charging roller.

65. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 50, wherein the consumable unit is a process cartridge, and wherein said consumable hardware part includes at least one of a photoconductor and a charging roller.